



SENATE JOURNAL
EXHIBIT NO. 17
DATE 2/9/11
SB 116

School of Medicine

Family Medicine

Mail code: FM
3181 S.W. Sam Jackson Park Rd.
Portland, Oregon 97239-3098
tel 503 494-7591
fax 503 494-4496

February 3, 2011

Senator Greg Hinkle
Montana Senate
PO Box 200500
Helena, MT 59620-0500

Re: Vote for SB 116, Prohibit Assisted Suicide

Dear Senator Hinkle:

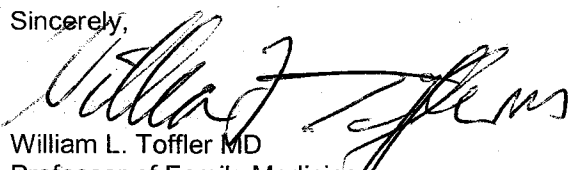
I am a doctor in Portland Oregon where assisted suicide is legal. I strongly encourage you to vote for SB 116 which would prohibit assisted-suicide in Montana.

In Oregon, the so-called safeguards in our law have proved to be a sieve. Although we were reassured that "only the patient" is supposed to take the lethal dose, there are documented cases of family members administering it. Family members often have their own agendas and also financial interests that dovetail with a patient's death. Yet the true extent of such cases is not known as the only data published comes from second-and even third-hand reports (often from doctors who themselves were not present at the death and who are active suicide promoters).

What we do know about assisted suicide in Oregon is essentially shrouded in secrecy. The scant information provided by the "official" Oregon statistics report that the majority of patients who have died via Oregon's law have been "well educated" with private health insurance. See official statistics at <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/pas/docs/year12.pdf>.

In other words, they were likely people with money. Was it really their "choice?"
I urge you to reserve choice in Montana and reject assisted suicide by explicitly prohibiting it.

Sincerely,


William L. Toffler MD
Professor of Family Medicine
OHSU--FM
Portland, OR 97239

wlt2011.010